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ABSTRACT

This report on vocational education and training (VET) in Bulgaria consists of a condensed description of the present situation in VET and analysis of the main challenges facing VET reform in the country. Chapter 1 offers basic data on Bulgaria. Chapter 2 describes main features of the VET system, strategic objectives for VET, and legislative framework. Developments in these specific areas are highlighted: administrative structures and decentralization; finance; adaptation of training to change; identification of skill needs; quality standards and qualifications; promotion of continuing vocational training; social partners; involvement of enterprises in VET; equal opportunities; access to training; and vocational guidance and counseling. Chapter 3 provides an overview of international assistance, including the European Union's Phare program for VET and the Leonardo program. Chapter 4 identifies current challenges in three areas: skill needs analysis, institutional arrangements, and qualifications and training methods. Chapter 5 outlines possible priorities for future assistance to sustain and further the reform process. Appendixes include key indicators (access and participation, finance, labor market trends); diagram of VET system; legislative framework; responsible bodies; and international assistance sources. (YLB)

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European Training Foundation

Vocational Education and Training Reform in

BULGARIA

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The European Training Foundation is an agency of the European Community which works in the field of vocational education and training in Central and Eastern Europe, the New Independent States and Mongolia. The Foundation also provides technical assistance to the European Commission for the Tempus Programme.

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (http://europa.eu.int).

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication

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FOREWORD

This report on vocational education and training reform has been produced by the European Training Foundation based mainly on information provided by the national Observatory. The report consists of a condensed description of the present situation in vocational education and training and analysis of the main challenges facing vocational education and training reform in the country. It also outlines possible priorities for future assistance to sustain and further the reform process. The report will be updated in 1998.

In order to provide accurate, up to date information on the progress of reform, a network of national Observatories has been set up by the Foundation in partnership with the national authorities of the partner countries. These national Observatories, mainly hosted by existing organisations involved in the reform process, gather and analyse information on vocational education and training issues according to a common framework agreed with the Foundation. The Observatories are also responsible for the dissemination of their outputs. Since 1996, national Observatories have been set up in 22 partner countries eligible for support under the EU Phare[1] and Tacis[2] programmes. The Foundation aims to set up Observatories in all remaining partner countries in these regions by the end of 1997.

This report is one of a series of country reports and factsheets which the Foundation is currently producing on the reform process in each of the partner countries. The Foundation intends to produce these documents on an annual basis. These reports are available from the Foundation and can also be consulted on the Foundation's Home Page on the WWW. Enquiries regarding the reports should be addressed to the Information & Publications Department at the Foundation.

Please note that more detailed information on vocational education and training reform issues in each country is also available directly from the respective national Observatory. Please refer to the list of national Observatories enclosed in this report.

Torino, October 1997

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1 In the Phare area, Observatories have been set up in Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia

2 In the Tacis area, Observatories have been set up in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Russian Federation (Moscow and St Petersburg) Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

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Since 1989 some efforts have been made to develop structures for a market economy, privatisation and democratisation, but few measurable results have been achieved. Serious economic problems due to internal and external factors as well as political difficulties have delayed further developments. As vocational education and training reforms also are at an early stage, much attention has to be given to the process of adapting it to the demands resulting from the Europe Agreement signed by Bulgaria in 1993.

1. BASIC DATA

Geographic area:	110,993 km²
Total population / population density / growth:	8.34 million (1995) / 75.1 per km² / decline 1% est.
Urban Population:	67.8% (1995)
Age structure:	0-14: 16% / 15-64: 72% / over 65: 12% / retired: 24%
Ethnic profile:	Bulgarian 86% / Turkish 9.6% / Sinti and Roma / 3.0% / other 1.4%
Languages:	Bulgarian (official)
GDP-ECU/GDP per capita-PPP-ECU/ growth:	9.9 Billion (1995) / per capita 4,209.8 (1995) / growth 2.1% (1995), -10.9% (1996)
Inflation:	123% (1996)
Privatisation of state enterprises:	No official figures available; estimates between 15% and 40%
Unemployment: (ILO definition)	13.7% (1996)
Education budget:	4.91% of GDP (1995), vocational education and training approximately 1.65%

2. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

2.1 Main Features of System

Basic vocational training can start after the 6th or 7th grade of general education (viz. 12 or 13 years). After completion of primary education (8th grade), students may choose further options among vocational schools. The current system allows for various levels of qualifications, taking from one to five years respectively:

- technical or vocational secondary comprehensive schools (4 or 5 years: general education with Matura, and some vocational subjects);
- secondary technical schools (up to 5 years, vocational school, including Matura)
- secondary vocational schools (3 years: vocational diploma), and
- professional gymnasiums or technical schools (which combine Matura with executive and management skills).

There are various possibilities of horizontal and vertical transitions in order to continue education at a higher level, and the labour market can be entered (see Annex 2) with the diplomas obtained. Post-secondary vocational schools have started on a pilot basis in order to offer shorter and better targeted training and fast integration into the labour market.

Vocational training and education in Bulgaria is traditionally scholastic and academically based ('school model'), and compulsory school lasts up to the age of 16 years. Enrolment in vocational education has declined due to increasing rates of students in general education. Management of both schools types is mostly centralised (with the exclusion of some general education schools financed by municipalities). In 1995, there existed 33 private technical gymnasiums (mostly in trade and management) out of a total of 247, and 226 secondary vocational schools. Some 190,000 students were enrolled.

Since 1991 vocational training has been removed from the education programmes offered by general secondary schools. As a result, graduates are entering the labour market without any vocational training.

2.2 Strategic Objectives for vocational education and training

A long-term strategy for the development of the vocational education and training system is set out in the 1996 'Concept for the Development of Secondary Education in Bulgaria'. In this document, the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science has adopted policy guidelines for the development of the vocational education and training sector that outline the following priorities:

- improvement of the quality of education;
- development of a system for teacher training;
- establishment of an independent council/agency for accreditation of vocational education and training;
- drawing up a new list of occupations in the secondary and post-secondary vocational education and training, and development of standards which allow for recognition in the European Union;
- development of a modular approach in vocational training.

2.3 Legislative Framework

Vocational education and training is partly regulated in the 1991 Law on School Education which adopted some new curricula to make course contents more relevant to the labour market in transition to a market economy.

However, no specific law exists on vocational education and training. In recent years new vocational education and training regulations have been issued by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Work but their impact on structural change in the system has been limited.

The Secondary Education Concept mentioned in 2.2. envisages amendments to the legal framework for vocational education, proposing a special chapter in the existing law for education. It is recognised that the key issue is to adjust the vocational education and training system to new training, economic and cultural challenges. The Ministry of Education and Science is preparing a draft law on vocational education and training (based on consultation of EU legal bases - see Annex 3).

Existing legislation for continuing training does not take into account the conditions of a market economy and focuses on previously needed skills.

2.4 Developments in Specific Areas

2.4.1 Administrative Structures and Decentralisation

The Bulgarian Constitution of 1991 assigns responsibility for education exclusively to the state. It "encourages education by establishing and financing schools, ... [and] establishes conditions for vocational training and retraining...". The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for general and vocational education and initial training (including strategies, standards, curricula and assessment). The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Work and the Ministry of Education and Science are both responsible for continuing training. However, the division of policy responsibilities between the Ministries of Education and Labour in this respect is unclear and requires further clarification (see Annex 4).

The educational system is relatively centralised, and regional authorities (oblasti) are not involved in vocational education and training. Partial delegation of responsibility took place only for schools financed by municipalities which are mostly for general education. Under the 1994 Decree No. 6 they have gained administrative and financial independence. By forming departments for training and re-training, they are allowed to create income for the maintenance of their facilities. As to the future Bulgaria is aiming at "retaining the centralised state influence and decentralising the administrative functions". Social partners are not yet involved.

2.4.2 Finance

School-based vocational education and training is funded out of the state budget. The Ministry of Education and Science allocates the money to the vocational and technical schools based on student numbers. Some sector ministries also co-finance schools in their field. Continuing training is funded out of the Vocational Training and Unemployment Fund, the state budget, by employers as well as from other sources (such as donations or sponsoring).

The high cost per student and decreasing number of students force Bulgaria to rationalise the system in order to increase cost-effectiveness (the average class sizes are 20-22). At the moment school financing covers little more than salaries. Teaching material has frequently not been updated or renewed, buildings are not being refurbished and equipment has not been maintained unless the school finds other funds by selling services or assistance from donors.

The Vocational Training and Unemployment Fund is mostly used to finance vocational training for the unemployed.

2.4.3 Adaptation of training to change

Vocational education is predominantly theoretical, and no practical training is taking place. Curricula and occupations are defined by the Ministry of Education and Science and are not based on labour market analysis. Curricula are developed within the Ministry of Education and Science after consultation with the sectoral ministries.

There is a need for training courses targeted at new sectors. In other (traditional) sectors there is more training output than required. This has resulted in a decrease in enrolment for vocations such as mechanical engineering, geology, mining, or metallurgy. In contrast, student numbers for economics, management and trade, tourism, and craftsmanship have increased.

Several pilot vocational schools apply a modular system. It is foreseen to extend this approach to other schools in order to achieve higher flexibility. In addition, the planned introduction of relatively high fees for Higher Education will direct more students to post-secondary vocational qualifications.

2.4.4 Identification of skill needs

It is difficult to identify the skills required by the labour market and the industry. Planning is still largely based on central decisions taken by the responsible ministries. No applied research is carried out to support these decisions and there is no systematic monitoring of the labour market. Moreover, many of the "new" economic activities take place in the informal economy where no reliable data exist.

In 1996 the Ministry of Education and Science set up the Research Institute of Education. It includes a small team of vocational education and training specialists, but there is no specific research institute for vocational training. Some data on job allocations is available through the work carried out at the National Labour Offices but inadequate information systems make it difficult to provide input for a coherent policy framework.

2.4.5 Quality standards and qualifications

A list of vocations was approved by the Ministry of Education and Science in 1994 after consultation with the Ministry of Labour. It contains 131 professions in professional gymnasiums and technical schools, 84 professions taught in secondary vocational schools and 45 professions for the basic vocational schools. They are clustered according to ISCED levels, types, and economic structures. So far, 183 occupations have been revised and sub-divided into 22 occupational areas. In general, new job profiles tend to be broader in order to ensure mobility and flexibility.

For quality assurance in vocational education and training, the Phare UVET project addresses the development of new quality standards. Active participation in the project by the Ministry for Education and Sport is further enhancing its capacity in planning and implementing systematic reform (see Annex 5).

2.4.6 Promotion of continuing vocational training

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has submitted to Parliament a draft Law on Protection against Unemployment regulating the activities of the National Employment Service (NES). It includes provisions for a national system for vocational training of adults and the retraining/up-skilling of the unemployed, occupational guidance for unemployed, the financing of training and the role and responsibilities of the various parties. The law was drafted without a broad consultation process.

Through its 9 regional offices and 122 labour offices the NES offers training to all unemployed people, however, the training is often not well targeted. Continuing training for upgrading skills of employed workers is almost non-existent and there is no system for the recognition of informal training outside schools. Many Training Centres will probably be closed by the end of the year (if confirmed by the Currency Board). There are national programmes for re-training soldiers (jointly with the Ministry of Defence) and prisoner rehabilitation.

Re-training for teachers is currently envisaged given that an additional 10% of teachers will probably lose their jobs at the end of 1997 (if further budget cuts are confirmed). Continuing training will be further restricted and only existing projects are likely to continue. Training for the unemployed will be limited to only those who are guaranteed a job for at least 6 months after their training.

2.4.7 Social partners

Social partners have not yet systematically participated in the development of vocational education and training strategies or in course contents, definition of skills needs, certification or assessment. They were involved, on occasion, in the pilot projects and their involvement will continue in the VETERST project on a regional level. Within the social partner organisations, some employers and rather fewer employee organisations are undertaking initiatives to improve the interrelation between market demands and vocational education and training.

Employer organisations like BIA (Bulgarian Industrial Association) and UPEE (Union of Private Enterprises and Entrepreneurs), together with the trade unions participate in the National Council for Tripartite Co-operation. The Council provides an opportunity for the social partners to influence the government's decisions in general. Employers' organisations are legally obliged to deal with:

- the "Professional retraining and unemployment fund", financed by employers;
- the development of vocational education and training in partnership with trade unions;
- the relationship between industry and university, the development of university centres established through international projects (Tempus), and the use of these university centres for industrial retraining and training of teachers, and training enterprise managers.

2.4.8 Involvement of enterprises in vocational education and training

Enterprises are only marginally involved in vocational education and training as the system of in-company training has collapsed. But current Tempus projects work on establishing links between universities and enterprises including the establishment of placement in Bulgarian enterprises. Draft legislation on the unemployed by the Ministry of Labour proposes to regulate employers' contributions to the National Employment Fund to cover costs of unemployment benefits and retraining of the unemployed.

2.4.9 Equal opportunities

Although women are now particularly vulnerable to unemployment (registered unemployed women constitute 53% of the unemployed workforce, especially women without qualification or with lower education), no specific law or regulation has been issued in this respect.

2.4.10 Access to training

The re-training and provision of skills to people who are unable to compete on equal terms in the labour market is regulated by the Education Law ("no discrimination based on ... race, nationality, sex, ethnic or social origin..."). A programme by the Ministry of Labour and the Know How Fund addresses access of handicapped people to training via a quota system, which includes financial support for employers. Rehabilitation of prisoners is addressed by a special programme (Ministry of Labour), and a Literacy, Qualification and Employment Programme targets regions with ethnically mixed populations. Finally, a programme for youth employment is showing first results (decrease in youth employment) by re-training and increasing occupational skills of those employed in enterprises which are subject to restructuring.

2.4.11 Vocational guidance and counselling

There is a lack of a vocational guidance in operation. However, the existing system will be upgraded within the VETERST projects, which are financed out of the 1995 Phare budget (see Annex 5).

3. INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

3.1 Overview of Phare Assistance in the field of vocational education and training

One of the priorities for future Phare interventions is to enhance the training of Bulgarian public officials to ensure that they are familiar with the contents of the Europe Agreement, the *acquis communautaire*, and their implications for the design of vocational education and training policies. A Phare 1993 pilot project targeted post-secondary vocational education and training and reviewed and developed principles for the upgrading of the whole vocational education and training system. This laid the foundations for expansion into much larger Phare 1995 and 1996 programmes on upgrading education and training.

By aiming at a national policy development to prepare the legal framework, VETERST (1995) aims at a comprehensive upgrading of vocational education and training via curriculum development, development of standards and assessment procedures and training of trainers. As a continuation, the 1996 Phare programme prioritises the establishment of a National Assessment and Accreditation Agency in Higher Education, school drop outs, and textbooks, management, and audit procedures. For 1997, no specific vocational education and training activities are planned (see Annex 5).

3.2 Preparation for Leonardo

The Bulgarian government has not yet taken a decision on an eventual participation in Leonardo because of uncertain funding. The Programme Management Unit of the Phare Education Programme is acting as the provisional Leonardo contact point. In 1996, 4 Leonardo proposals with Bulgarian "silent partners" have been provisionally approved.

3.3 Other Assistance

Most projects are being handled by either the Ministry of Labour or the Ministry of Education and Science. Significant bilateral activity is taking place with a number of EU Member States including Austria, Germany and Denmark. Important projects are carried out by the World Bank (see Annex 6).

4. CHALLENGES AND FURTHER NEEDS

The modernisation of training contents and the conceptualisation of an institutional framework for training are important prerequisites for a further upgrading of the system. Much of this needs further support from donors, although the Phare 1995 vocational education and training programme (VETERST) is already addressing several issues relevant to accession readiness. The following current challenges can be identified but severe economic constraints may impede further reform plans:

4.1 Skill Needs Analysis

Curricula are developed centrally by the Ministry of Education and Science and are not based upon a systematic analysis of labour market needs. It is, therefore, crucial to be better equipped to identify skills areas which should be given priority and to forecast those which will be in demand. This will necessitate research on information collection and analysis, and a regular check on the relevance of vocational education and training curricula to the labour market, which to date is not carried out. Therefore, vocational education and training are characterised by a high graduate unemployment rate.

4.2 Institutional Arrangements

- There is need for a consistent national policy and managed framework for vocational education and training, including the enhancement of the current legal framework. It does not address the whole range of issues related to vocational education and training but concentrates only on upgrading vocational schools. Hence it is crucial that the new law being prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science include items such as defining :

    - the structure of vocational education and training (including de-centralisation),
    - ways of acquiring vocational qualifications, the rights and responsibilities of all institutions related to vocational education and training,
    - the involvement of social partners, and
    - different approaches to skills training (including on-the-job training).

  In order to ensure compatibility with vocational systems in the EU, the Foundation is providing Bulgaria with an overview of existing legislation. Fostering collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and reaching consensus on a strategy may be the main challenge in this area.

- Vocational education and training has not been at the top of the political agenda, and is, therefore, still only at the initial stage of reform. This is linked to the lack of comprehensive strategy for secondary education. The state provides little investment for modernising the infrastructure of vocational schools which results in a lack of practical training. An imminent challenge is it to rationalise the resources and facilities of the school system. Given the severe economic constraints and demographic developments, a number of vocational education and training schools will probably be closed by the end of the year.

- The responsibilities for vocational education and training in Bulgaria lay exclusively in the hands of the government, and social partners involvement is comparatively low. This is partly due to the lack of resources, institutional capacity and experience in questions relating to vocational education and training.
- The current quantitative approach (based on student numbers) in distributing resources to schools is not reflecting quality and performance criteria. No clear framework exists for allowing schools to receive and maintain additional resources.
- There are no mechanisms to provide vocational guidance and career counselling.

4.3 Qualifications and Training Methods

- National expertise for the development of a high-quality and reliable certification system need to be reinforced. In particular, the development of occupational standards is a priority, and curriculum principles need to be developed.
- The overall problem for continuing training is its exclusion from current reforms of initial school-based vocational education and training. There is also a lack of development strategy at the national level to improve the relation between continuing training and universities. The present main challenge in continuing training is to address the imminent redundancies of teachers via re-training in order to avoid unemployment.

5. POSSIBLE PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE ASSISTANCE

Sustained financial and technical assistance is essential to support the development and implementation of the comprehensive vocational education and training reform process which has been initiated. Other specific areas for technical and financial assistance are:

- Support to set up a coherent information system concerning labour market developments and for identifying skill shortages. Assistance is needed to enhance the capacities of existing applied research in order to bring labour market information into the vocational education and training policy-making process.

- Further assistance to support the current process of developing a Law on Vocational Education and Training for a labour market-oriented upgrading of the system and in order to ensure compatibility with vocational systems in the EU.

- Assuring vocational education and training quality by overcoming the complete split in content between general education and vocational training. Experience gained from the pilot post-secondary vocational education and training system now needs to be generalised into the overall policy framework so that implementation on a national scale can follow suit. A first step in the reform has to improve the infrastructures (buildings and equipment) in the remaining schools. In order to deliver more up-to-date training, Bulgaria needs funds for new technology, materials and textbooks and technical assistance for training provision.

- Encouraging the involvement of the social partners. After the adoption of a legal framework, support should focus on training social partners in vocational education and training issues and in building up their organisations.

- Developing more efficient management for enhancing the financing of the vocational education and training system. In addition, new income generating mechanisms (including how to raise financial contributions from the social partners) need to be created.

- Strengthening vocational guidance and counselling through targeted training of responsible staff.

- Development of curriculum principles and training standards, similar to those of EU countries, in order to move towards the mutual recognition of qualifications. Much needs to be done in the process of curriculum reform and developing standards, and careful targeting of financial assistance could help build local capacity and speed up the reforms. Furthermore, curricula which are too theoretical should be broadened, and their practical content increased (focus on social competences, and on entrepreneurial training). The level of teacher preparation and qualification has to be enhanced. Finally, a 'VETERST II' is needed to develop more pilot schools in order to give the process momentum.

- Linking continuing training to initial training, including the shared use of infrastructure. Companies should be included in assistance programmes for training in order to stimulate the creation of a market for continuing training and raise its profile.

Annexes

1. **Key Indicators**
2. **Diagram of the vocational education and training system**

3. **Legislative Framework**
4. **Responsible bodies**
5. **International Assistance**

ANNEX 1

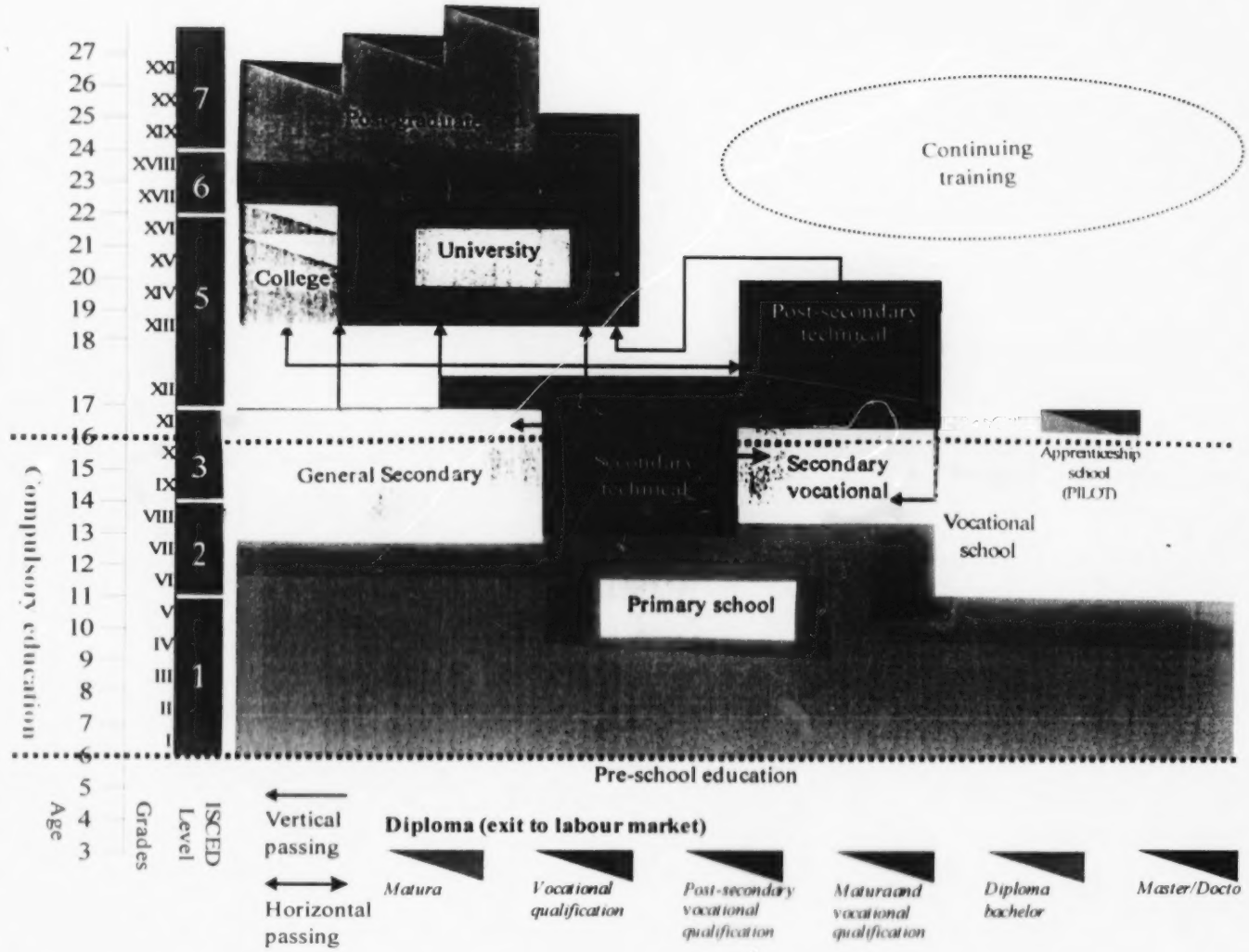
Key Indicators [1]

Indicators	1994			1995		
A. Access and Participation						
1. Participation in education and training of 15-19 year olds of which in vocational education and training	58.1% 57.6%			59.9% 57.2%		
2. Participation in education and training of 18 year olds of which in vocational education and training	n.a. n.a.			n.a. n.a.		
3. Relative importance of vocational education and training in secondary education (in terms of enrolment)						
Total Males Females	58.1% 72.5% 43.8%			57.2% 71.8% 42.7%		
4. Educational attainment of the population (25-59 years old)	SCED 0-2	SCED 3	ISCED 5-7	SCED 0-2	SCED 3	ISCED 5-7
Total Males Females	66.6% 67.6% 65.4%	23.4% 22.6% 24.3%	10% 9.8% 10.3%	66% 66.9% 65.1%	23.5% 22.9% 24.1%	10.5% 10.2% 10.8%
(25-30 years old) Total Males Females	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
B. Finance						
5. Public Expenditure on Education as percentage of GDP						
6. Public Expenditure on vocational education and training as percentage of GDP	n.a.			n.a.		
C. Labour Market Trends						
7. Number of employed	3.235.000			3.038.000		
8. Unemployment rates						
Total Younger than 25 Older than 25	20.5% 44.9% 16.8%			14.7% 37.7% 11.6%		
9. Unemployment rates by educational attainment of the population (25-59 years old)	ISCED.0-2	ISCED 3	ISCED 5-7	ISCED.0-2	ISCED 3	ISCED 5-7
Total Males Females	17.9% 18.2% 17.6%	12.6% 12.6% 12.6%	7.9% 7.6% 8.2%	12.8% 12.5% 13.1%	8.7% 9% 8.4%	5.1% 4.7% 5.4%

1. Data provided by National Observatory.

ANNEX 2

Diagram of vocational education and training System



This diagram represents the first stage in the ongoing development of a standard graphical model for vocational education and training systems. Future refinement may include the further alignment of terms, student enrolment and dropout figure, and local language terms.

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ANNEX 3

Legislative Framework

While a specific law for vocational education and training is still missing, the following legal acts so far provide the legal basis for vocational education and training:

- 1990 Law on Autonomy of Academic Institutions;
- 1991 Law on School Education adopting new curricula for vocational education and training to make course content more relevant to the labour market in transition to a market economy;
- 1993 Law on Protection Against Unemployment establishes the Fund for Vocational Training and Unemployment which currently is only used to train the unemployment (amendments to the law are under discussion in parliament);
- 1994 Decree No. 6 by the Ministry of Education and Science concerning specific economic regulations for the activities of sections within the national education system: defines those sections of the system which are financed out of a local budget as economic organisations and legal entities. Endowed with administrative and financial independence, they may also form departments for training and re-training, and thereby create income for the maintenance of their facilities;
- 1995 Law on Higher Education focuses on the introduction of the bachelor degree, quality assurance and accreditation (reflecting Tempus priorities of structural improvement and preparation for Socrates);
- initial preparations for a draft law on vocational education and training are underway in the Ministry of Education and Science. It will seek to regulate the structure of vocational education and training, types of schools, ways of acquiring vocational qualifications, financing mechanisms, the involvement of social partners and private training provision;
- in 1996 the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science has adopted policy guidelines for the development of the vocational education and training sector that particularly include the following measures:

  a) development of a system for teacher training and career path;
  b) establishment of an independent agency for vocational qualifications;
  c) drafting of a vocational education and training law;
  d) implementation of a new list of professions in the secondary and post-secondary vocational education and training;
  e) development of new curriculum;
  f) development of modular way of vocational education and training;

the development of new quality standards will be addressed in the VETERST project and is included in the policy guidelines of the Ministry of Education and Science .

ANNEX 4

Responsible Bodies

- Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for initial training;
- Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Work and Ministry of Education and Science are both responsible for continuing training;
- the new Accreditation Agency for Higher Education has started work after the appointment of the director in July 1996, and the first meeting of the Accreditation Board (in which all universities are represented) took place in November 1996. Its establishment is supported by Phare;
- a separate Accreditation Council/Agency for vocational education and training is currently under discussion.

ANNEX 5

International Assistance

Phare vocational education and training programmes

The 1993 Phare pilot project which targeted post-secondary vocational education and training reviewed and developed principles for the upgrading of the whole vocational education and training system. Project activities included: comparative analysis of Bulgarian and EU vocational education and training best practice; review of useful applications of best practice; and curriculum development for a sample of five key occupational profiles.

The above project laid the foundations for expansion into a much larger (9 MECU) Phare 1995 programme on education and training ('VETERST') which has an 5.1 MECU vocational education and training component covering the following:

- Comprehensive upgrading of vocational education and training: curriculum development especially innovative teaching and learning methodologies; development of standards and assessment procedures; training of trainers, initiation of a career guidance system for teachers and students; national policy development to prepare legal framework; provision of materials and equipment;
- Teacher career paths: development of new models for teacher development, focusing upon in-service training and pre-service training; teacher upgrading and incentives;
- Foreign language skills: setting up three centres for foreign language teacher training; curriculum development and preparation of learning materials.

In 1996, a 2 MECU Phare programme with the following three components:

- National Assessment and Accreditation Agency in Higher Education- 375,000 ECU (continuation of a feasibility study from VETERST);
- School drop outs 1.35 MECU (continuation of a feasibility study from VETERST)
- Textbooks, management, and audit - 275,000 ECU.

For 1997, no specific vocational education and training activities are planned. If educational programmes will be maintained, the emphasis will be on Tempus and possibly textbook provision for primary and secondary education as a whole (which will include certain vocational education and training elements). An important objective of future Phare projects will be EU accession which is prioritised in the 1996-99 Indicative Programme.

Project title/Year --- Subjects	GTAF 93 (BG9314) 1993-96	MLSW project 1993-96	GTAF 93 (BG9315) 1993-96	VETERST 95 1995-98
Initial Training (Secondary vocational education and training)	Study on financial management of the whole education sector			• curriculum revision, teacher training, equipment upgrading in some 35 pilot schools; • development of national framework in vocational education and training; • feasibility studies on school dropouts, science park networks and accreditation of higher education institutions
Adult Continuing Training (including post-secondary vocational education and training)	curriculum revision, teacher training, equipment upgrading in 5 pilot schools; policy development	Ministry of Labour programme on continuing training and retraining of unemployed. Started in 1996		
Management training/ Business Education			Development of capacity for executive training	
Budget	**1.0 MECU**	**1.0 MECU**	**1.4 MECU**	**9.0 MECU**

Bilateral Projects / International Assistance

- **Austria:**

  development of curricula and learning materials for 5 secondary vocational schools in economics, including the establishment of training firms.

- **Germany:**

  establishment of 3 training centres for adult training and retraining and the introduction of new qualifications for installation technicians; training in economics in 5 vocational schools; the pilot development of a legal framework for vocational education and training; an interdisciplinary centre for baking and confectionery vocations in Plovdiv; training courses for welding and training for SMEs. A project in the banking sector is under preparation (for secondary, post-secondary and university level).

- **Denmark:**

  curricula for training in economics in three post-secondary vocational schools have been developed.

- **Greece (with Germany):**

  The Ministry of Labour is running vocational education and training projects for the exchange of workers.

World Bank money (from a Japanese grant) has been allocated to the human resources development sector which aims at training and retraining in three areas: project management training for ministry staff; methodological assistance for the development of standards and new qualifications, and disadvantaged groups.

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